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FOR SECRETARY CLINTON FROM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DOUG SILLIMAN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ENRG](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT OF TURKISH FM DAVUTOGLU
TO WASHINGTON

Classified By: CDA Doug Silliman for reasons 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (S) Newly appointed Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu welcomes the opportunity to meet with you early in his tenure as Minister. Our continued willingness to engage the Turks at the highest levels reinforces the message that this administration considers Turkey a strategic partner. Turkish officials say they will continue to push ahead on the normalization effort with Armenia, though it hangs by a thread because of Azerbaijan's effective use of domestic political pressure inside Turkey, leading GOT officials to insist publicly that opening the border with Armenia is contingent on a deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh. The economic downturn that is leading to record levels of unemployment, and the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) weakened mandate in the aftermath of a disappointing showing in local elections in late March, led to a recent cabinet reshuffle that brought Davutoglu to MFA and sent his predecessor, Ali Babacan, upstairs to coordinate the GOT's economic portfolios. The Turks remain deeply concerned about the potential damage to the bilateral relationship should a congressional resolution on Armenian "Genocide" pass.

KEY POINTS TO RAISE

¶2. (S) During your meeting with FM Davutoglu, I suggest you make the following key points:

- BILATERAL RELATIONS: Our bilateral relationship is critically important for both our countries and we must continue to consult closely and often on the many issues on which we share interests.
- TURKEY-ARMENIA; ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN: The Turks and Armenians will continue to need a strong push to close a deal to normalize relations, open the border, and start a joint examination of 1915, though it is now complicated by Azerbaijan's successful effort tying progress on this initiative to a parallel effort on Nagorno-Karabakh. USG remains committed to helping all three parties move these dual processes forward, but we believe the normalization of Turkey's relations with Armenia should occur regardless of what occurs on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue (para 5);
- CYPRUS: Comprehensive settlement of Cyprus in 2009 is absolutely critical for the future of a reunified island, Turkey's own long-term hopes for EU membership, and NATO-EU cooperation. The US will remain fully engaged in helping both sides reach a deal and hopes Turkey will be able to demonstrate continued support for the process and flexibility in dealing with difficult questions when real negotiations begin later this year (para 6);
- IRAQ/PKK: Intelligence sharing against the PKK has led to a real improvement in our overall relations, as well as

between Ankara and Baghdad and Ankara and Erbil. Turkey needs to continue to work with Iraq and Iraqi Kurdish officials directly, which the US will continue to facilitate through the trilateral process. The GOT seems to be looking at ways to undercut the PKK by addressing core political and cultural demands of Turkey's Kurdish population (para 7);

- IRAN: Despite its interest in Iran as a source of energy, Turkey should press Tehran harder to comply with the IAEA and UNSC resolutions (para 9);

- AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN: Turkey and the US must intensify our already close cooperation and consultation on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Turkey could play a crucial role in ensuring the success of NATO's mission in Afghanistan and spark the political and social development needed to counter the dangerous spread of the Taliban's radicalism and its efforts to undermine Pakistan's democracy (paras 10-11);

- TURKEY'S UN SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENCY: We look forward to supporting Turkey's June 2009 UNSC presidency and working cooperatively to achieve its goals (para 12); and

- ENERGY SECURITY: Urge Turkey to take steps immediately to open the East-West energy corridor. Allowing Iraq as an entry point for Nabucco is one important step. Another step is to sign the Nabucco IGA in late June (para 13).

WATCH OUT FOR

13. (S) Davutoglu will very likely raise:

- ARMENIA GENOCIDE RESOLUTION: An Armenian Genocide Resolution in the House of Representatives is horrifying to them and will set back or scuttle entirely the simultaneous efforts Turkey is pursuing to normalize relations with Armenia, achieve a deal on Nagorno-Karabakh, and finally conclude a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus issue (para 5);

- CYPRUS: During your visit to Ankara, you noted the naming of a special envoy for Cyprus would be a good idea. Davutoglu and the Turks will want to hear about USG plans to engage more deeply in the Cyprus issue in hopes that we can bring greater pressure to bear on the Greek Cypriots to finalize a deal by the end of the year (para 6);

- US RECOMMITMENT TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE: As the GOT's chief architect of its Middle East policy, Davutoglu will want to hear your thoughts on getting the new Israeli administration to commit to the peace process, including a resumption of its indirect talks with Damascus facilitated by the Turks. He will likely also press on continued US outreach to Syria and the need to bring HAMAS -"a political reality"- into the peace process (para 8).

BACKGROUND

14. (S) Your visit to Turkey and that of President Obama earlier this Spring paved the way for a fundamentally new relationship with the Turks, who remain committed to working closely with the United States on a host of foreign policy issues critical to both countries. Our expressed commitment to continue the sharing of actionable intelligence on the PKK continues to bolster both the bilateral relationship and GOT efforts to address long-standing complaints of Turkey's ethnic Kurdish minority in an effort to undermine and ultimately bring to an end the terrorist PKK. Turkey was slow to feel the effects of the global economic slowdown, but continues to be hit hard on exports and jobs. The economic downturn and the ruling AKP's disappointing performance in local elections in late March have brought added pressure to PM Erdogan and led to the recent cabinet reshuffle that took Davutoglu from the Prime Minister's office to the Foreign Ministry. Erdogan's recent remarks have been both positive (admitting mistakes of the past that led to significant

minority populations leaving Turkey) and problematic (tying the Armenia normalization effort to progress on Nagorno-Karabakh), but all seem predicated on his perceived need to shore up political support for the AKP, ranging from nationalists on its center right flank to liberal reformers on the left.

TURKEY/ARMENIA/NAGORNO-KARABAKH

15. (S) Turkey and Armenia initialed a roadmap for the normalization of relations on April 22; President Obama referred to the breakthrough in his April 24 Armenian Remembrance Day statement. Since then, however, Turkey has appeared to backtrack, at least publicly, with both PM Erdogan and, most recently, FM Davutoglu, during his May 25 visit to Baku, linking the opening of the border with Armenia to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh (N-K) crisis. While the normalization process with Armenia has sparked renewed and intensified efforts to resolve the N-K conflict, preconditioning the normalization of relations with Armenia with resolution of N-K could dissuade Yerevan from moving forward with Azerbaijan and calls into question Turkey's commitment to the agreement it initialed in April. You should urge FM Davutoglu to press ahead immediately and without pre-conditions on the normalization of relations with Armenia, underscoring the United States, sustained and high-level engagement on resolving the N-K conflict and Turkey's assurances to us that it would honor its commitments regarding Armenia. Normalizing relations and opening the border with Armenia would be a game-changer, lending confidence to the Armenian side and catalyzing the resolution of this and perhaps other regional frozen conflicts, and would allow Turkey to play a more dynamic role in promoting the stability and development of the whole South Caucasus region.

CYPRUS/EU

16. (C) Turkey has taken a largely hands-off approach to the latest round of Cyprus settlement negotiations, giving "TRNC" leader Talat free rein to negotiate a deal. GOT officials are concerned that the Greek Cypriots have little motivation to achieve a deal and will try to delay as pressure on a

November 2009 EU deadline builds for Turkey to open its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels. Failure to do so will put Turkey's EU membership aspirations at risk, but the GOT is very unlikely to take this step absent a comprehensive settlement.

Real progress on Cyprus would help save Turkey's EU membership prospects (which we have long publicly supported), facilitate expanded NATO-EU cooperation, and provide an incentive to resolve other frozen disputes (Aegean, Armenia).

Ankara will push us again to consider naming a special envoy given your support for the concept voiced during your March 7 meetings here.

IRAQ/KRG

17. (C) The Turks are becoming frustrated with the very slow progress and lack of concrete results produced by the US-TU-IZ trilateral process on the PKK. Nonetheless, they remain committed to participating and recognize the need to establish good working relations with their Iraqi (and Iraqi Kurdish) counterparts to prepare for the day when US troops are no longer in Iraq. Turkish officials remain concerned about Iranian influence in Iraq and are committed to expanding ties with Iraq, including building on a nascent dialogue with Iraqi Kurdish leaders. Massoud Barzani slowed that process when he turned down an invitation to meet with President Gul during the latter's visit to Baghdad earlier this Spring. There are indications - including positive statements by President Gul and PM Erdogan - that the GOT is considering how to undercut support in Turkey for the PKK by addressing the political and social demands of Turkish Kurds.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

18. (C) The GOT is eager to resume indirect Israel-Syria talks, however Ankara has some work to do yet to regain Israeli confidence after PM Erdogan's blistering verbal attacks during the Gaza crisis. At a joint press conference in Syria in early May, Presidents Gul and Asad called for the indirect talks to resume and the GOI to name a negotiator. Davutoglu has been this government's Middle East policy architect and principal interlocutor with regional leaders as well as with Hamas and may press for the USG to talk with HAMAS directly as well as to continue our renewed dialogue with the Syrians. PM Erdogan told a visiting CODEL last week that HAMAS is not a terrorist organization but a "political reality" that must be factored into the peace process.

PRESSING IRAN

19. (C) The Turks are deeply concerned about Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions, but have done little publicly to press the Iranians to accept the P5-plus-1 deal. They have been more helpful in private. Turkey seems determined to increase energy cooperation with Iran. Talks for a gas deal continue. On May 28, Turkey signed a protocol with Iran, Iraq, and Syria to connect their electricity grids, paving the way for export and import of electricity among the four nations.

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN

110. (C) Turkey has been resolute on Afghanistan and Pakistan. It pledged \$100 million to Afghanistan at each of the last two Afghanistan donors, conferences in London and Paris and \$100 million to Pakistan at the April 2009 Pakistan Donors, Conference in Tokyo. The Turks believe that the international community's efforts should be focused on reconstruction and development, and have focused their contributions in Afghanistan on health and education, particularly for girls. Turkey has twice commanded ISAF and will resume command of RC Kabul in November 2009, boosting its troop commitment to 1900 from about 820. The Turks operate a civilian-led PRT in Wardak province and are giving consideration to a second PRT, most likely in northern Afghanistan. They have close historical and cultural ties to both Afghanistan and Pakistan, including very deep and well-established ties to Pakistan's General Staff and Intelligence Services, that have allowed them to promote dialogue and cooperation between the Presidents and senior security officials of the two countries through the trilateral "Ankara Process." The Turks have hosted three such summits since April 2007 and believe their effort complements the more action oriented U.S.-led trilateral process. In Afghanistan, Turkey believes it is playing a constructive role by urging the ethnic Turkish populations in the North to support Afghanistan's unity and stability, but

has at the same time urged constitutional reform in Afghanistan to ensure that all ethnic groups are treated equitably.

111. (C) Turkey has been a key supporter of Pakistan's democratic government, using its connections with both the government and opposition parties to press all sides to unify and support the democratic process. The Turks have expressed interest in and some support for Afghan/Pakistani-led initiatives to engage "moderate Taliban" or moderate representatives of other opposing military forces. Turkey believes that its message to all sides of the political equation in both Afghanistan and Pakistan is enhanced by its status as an independent, developed, majority-Muslim country whose own democracy has endured and even thrived despite episodes of military intervention. Turkey hosted a meeting of the Special Representatives to Pakistan and Afghanistan, including Ambassador Holbrooke, in Istanbul on May 18, and has announced it will host the next Ministerial meeting of

the Friends of a Democratic Pakistan. According to MFA contacts, Davutoglu intends to travel to Islamabad as soon as possible, most likely in June.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENCY

¶12. (C) Turkey assumed the presidency of the UN Security Council on June 1, the first time since assuming its non-permanent seat on January 1. It remains unclear what the Turks hope to accomplish during their presidency, though they seem amenable to our suggestion that they focus on counterterrorism efforts.

ENERGY SECURITY

¶13. (C) Over the past two decades, Turkey and the U.S. have shared a strategic vision to bring new oil and gas resources to market through new routes. Opening an East-West corridor for gas would strengthen the ties of Central Asia and the Caucasus with the West and decrease the dependence of eastern and central European countries on one gas source. Over the past two years, we have also seen Turkey articulate another vision that is sometimes at odds with our shared one; Turkey's gas needs come first. With the appointment of a new Energy Minister in the cabinet reshuffle, Taner Yildiz, Turkey has experienced a breakthrough in negotiations with Azerbaijan and Russia for additional gas supply. By contrast, negotiations with Nabucco partners appear to have taken a turn for the worse, with Turkey making a play to hoard Iraqi gas that may be available for export to Europe. We should remind the Turks that win-win solutions are possible. A policy that positions Turkey at the heart of an East-West energy corridor will inevitably pull more resources to Turkey as well as Europe. With the transit of increased gas resources, Turkey can strengthen its own relationships with Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iraq and the EU.

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